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**EYES ONLY**

8 April 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH Division

SUBJECT: Guatemalan acquisition of Iron Curtain arms.

1. The addressees of the original and copies of this memorandum have been alerted to the extreme importance of the subject matter, and [ ] has been requested to get on top of this matter and give it highest priority attention during the forthcoming days and until we have pressed the matter to conclusion. Each of the other addressees has a role to play in connection with the matter, and while contributions of ideas and recommendations are solicited from them -- it is most important that the handling of this matter be coordinated in one place, viz. [ ] This would apply in particular to any propagandistic exploitation of this matter and no directives should be given about it without prior clearance as indicated.

2. Toward the close of our briefing session with Assistant Secretary Holland this development was the subject of extensive discussion. Everyone present, including the Director and Deputy Director, was impressed with the significance of the opportunity afforded to us if this matter is properly handled and dealt with. The obvious first phase is a concentration on the intelligence aspect of the matter and until we have firmed up the intelligence concerning the shipment and its time and method of delivery, including the identification of the vessel or other means of transport, no other action of any kind should be taken. If we are able to pin this one down and develop firm intelligence concerning the shipment, there are a number of means of exploitation which will have to be considered at a very high policy level, and the possibility exists that strong measures may be taken.

3. It is our current thinking that we should take no action at this stage to deter or interfere with the shipment, but rather allow events to take their course at least to the point when exposure would be most compromising to the Guatemalans.

4. In a conversation with Admiral Espe yesterday afternoon, I called his attention to this matter and underscored its importance. I proposed to him and he agreed to an "intelligence partnership" with regard to this shipment. More specifically, I suggested

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that we keep each other fully informed of whatever might come to our attention respectively about the shipment and that our joint resources be concentrated upon the obtainment -- through secret means -- of all possible information about it. I have recommended to [ ] that he follow up on this opening conversation with Admiral [ ] or his Deputy, and I think that it is important that this be done at an early date. In this follow-up [ ] should emphasize the importance of avoiding any showing of our (US) knowledge or interest so as to avoid a premature flushing of the covey.

FRANK C. WISNER  
Deputy Director (Plans)

cc: C/PP  
G/PI  
PP/ECD ✓

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